

# Jail Ministry

## Connecting With Mercy



**"Let us not close our hearts. Let us not lose confidence.  
Let us never give up. There are no situations which God can not change."  
-Pope Francis-**

Collecting the following items as outreach to inmates and detainees at  
Calhoun County Jail at Weekend Masses **October 21-22, 2023**

### **Suggested items:**

- Unused leftover Christmas cards
- "Forever" postage stamps
- Prepaid postcards
- Paperback books
- Granola bars or snack bars
- Packets of coffee
- Ramen noodles

Jail Ministry's mission is to enkindle, renew, and strengthen the faith of those imprisoned, encouraging them to open their hearts to God's grace. This work is deeply rooted in Catholic social teaching, which upholds the life and dignity of all people, including those in prison.

In November 2000, the U.S. Bishops wrote a pastoral letter about restorative justice, an approach to crime which is based on *"the need for God in the lives of all who have been affected by crime."* This means outreach to victims and their loved ones, the families of inmates, and members of the entire community, as well as those imprisoned.

Chaplains and lay volunteers who have devoted many hours to jail ministry say that their own spiritual growth has been enriched by the experience. Prisoners have written prayers, formed study groups, and shared their stories, inspiring others to a spiritual rebirth. Across the nation, with the continuing shortage of priests, trained Catholic lay ministers are taking on a larger role. Some of our parishioners have volunteered to be Extraordinary Ministers at the Calhoun County jail. Unfortunately, that program had to be suspended during the Covid restrictions, but should begin again soon.

The jail is a direct supervision facility which also serves as a Federal Detention Center. Inmates are assigned to a pod based on their level of security, and corrections officers work in the living area with the inmates. The jail population averages close to 600 residents. About one-third are being housed for the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, representing 40+ countries and multiple languages.

A chaplain provided by the Haven of Rest offers Bible studies, classes, and on-going support, supplying postage for residents to keep in touch with family. We will also be supporting "Joy to the Jail", a Christmas outreach to provide cards for residents to send home to loved ones.

**May those who are incarcerated be touched by God's unfailing love and mercy.**